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ABSTRACT

Microethnographic techniques are used to study and describe the salient aspects of the social competence acquired by children in a kindergarten or first-grade classroom. The role of the school and the teacher in the socialization process is examined through investigation of both verbal and nonverbal communication and interaction patterns. (LH)

Occasional Paper No. 26

STOP AND FREEZE:
THE NEGOTIATION OF SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE IN A KINDERGARTEN/FIRST-GRADE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Children learn more than the mastery of academic content at school. They also learn to become socially competent members of the classroom community. Classroom interaction is a social activity comprised of the verbal and nonverbal behaviors which students and teachers manifest and interpret in face-to-face encounters. This study uses microethnographic techniques to discover and describe important aspects of the social competence acquired by children in a kindergarten/first-grade classroom.

Stop and Freeze: The Negotiation of Social and Physical Space in a Kindergarten/First-Grade Classroom[1,2]

Jeffrey Shultz and Susan Florio[3]

Upon entering school for the first time, children must learn how to behave appropriately in the classroom. At any given moment, they need to know what is expected of them by the teacher and by their fellow classmates. They need, in other words, to be socially competent. Students who exhibit less than socially competent behavior can be labelled "behavior problems," "hyperactive," or "slow." Social competence entails knowing what context one is in, what behavior is considered appropriate to that context and, therefore, the "capacity for monitoring contexts, and . . . for knowing when the context changes" (Erickson & Shultz, 1977, p. 5). Not being able to recognize changes in context may result in behavior that is considered inappropriate by other participants in the situation.

Participants in a situation collectively create and sustain contexts for interaction by means of communication in a variety of channels.

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[1]Versions of this paper were presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Houston, 1977, and at the Kent State University Conference on Face-to-Face Interaction, Ohio, 1977. It also appears in The Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 1979, 10(3), 166-181.

[2]The research reported here was supported in part by an NIMH Post-doctoral Fellowship awarded to Jeffrey Shultz and a Spencer Foundation grant awarded to Frederick Erickson. The authors also wish to acknowledge the support of the University of Cincinnati Research Council and the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University.

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Junctures between these contexts must be marked in a manner such that participants in the situation will know that the context has changed and that the criteria for what constitutes appropriate behavior have changed. At the junctures between contexts, shifts occur in a number of different channels of communication such as posture, interpersonal distance, gaze direction, speech prosody, and conversational topic (Fitzgerald, 1975; Shultz, in press; Erickson & Shultz, 1977). As will be demonstrated, such shifts can be thought about as the embodiment of changing rights and obligations among participants as they subtly redefine social identity and activity.

In a classroom, the teacher and students need ways of signaling to each other that the context has changed and that something new is about to happen. The teacher, as locus of social control in the classroom, needs to communicate to students that activity and behavioral expectations are changing. These signals for contextual change are especially critical in the early grades when children are not yet fully socialized into the culture of schools, and at the beginning of the school year, when students haven't yet learned what constitutes the new context for interaction.

The major purpose of the study has been to discover what children need to know in order to be considered competent members of the classroom culture. We follow Goodenough in using a cognitive definition of culture as consisting of, "whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves" (Goodenough, 1964, p. 36). Goodenough refines this notion of culture to include the expectations persons have of the behavior of others by asserting that

> there are different role expectations that go with different social relationships and different social situations. Each of these different expectations constitutes a different culture to be learned (p. 4).

The focus of our study was to uncover *what it is that children need to know in order to act in a manner that is considered appropriate in the classroom.* In investigating this question it is important to discover, by means of careful examination of the contexts through which teacher and children navigate, what teacher and children do in interaction in order to accomplish classroom events.

This paper examines the ways in which one teacher signals to her students that something new is about to happen. In particular, the contextual changes that occur in an open activity period called "worktime" in a kindergarten/first-grade classroom are examined in detail.

The Context

Setting

The setting for the study was a kindergarten/first-grade classroom in a suburb of Boston. The neighborhood the school was in was predominantly Italian-American and most of the students in the classroom were Italian-American.

The class contained both kindergarten and first-grade students. During the first year of the study, there were 14 kindergarten students and 11 first-grade students. Eight of the 11 first-graders had been in kindergarten in the same room with the same teacher the previous year. She had been teaching in mixed-age classrooms for several years.

Data Collection

Seventy hours of videotape were collected in the classroom over

the course of two school years. A large proportion of the videotapes (approximately 60%) was collected during the first two weeks of school of each of the two years. In addition to the videotapes, supplementary field notes were taken. During the second year, a participant observer spent several days each week in the classroom. The resulting complementary information informed the analysis of the videotapes (cf. Florio, Note 1).

The analyses reported here are based on observation of the videotapes made during worktime on six days during the first year of the study and are supplemented by field notes from participant observation. Four of the six days were in September, two during the first week of school and two during the second week of school. One day was during December, approximately one week before Christmas vacation. The last day was at the end of April. In all, approximately eight hours of videotape were viewed in performing the analyses reported in this paper.

Activities Observed: Circles and Worktime

Two different kinds of activity occurred during the course of a day in the classroom we studied: whole group meetings which participants called "circles," and multifocused activity times called "worktime" and "snack." During circles, the teacher and students sat on the floor at the front of the room in a place they all called the "circle area" (see Figure 1). Circles were used by the teacher to bring the students together in order to convey academic information and for disciplinary purposes. Circles were the most tightly controlled activities in the classroom from the teacher's point of view. Any deviation from their single focus constituted grounds for some kind of sanctioning behavior from her (cf. Bremme, Note 2).

During worktime, students were dispersed around the room. They engaged in a variety of tasks of their own choosing. Worktime was an

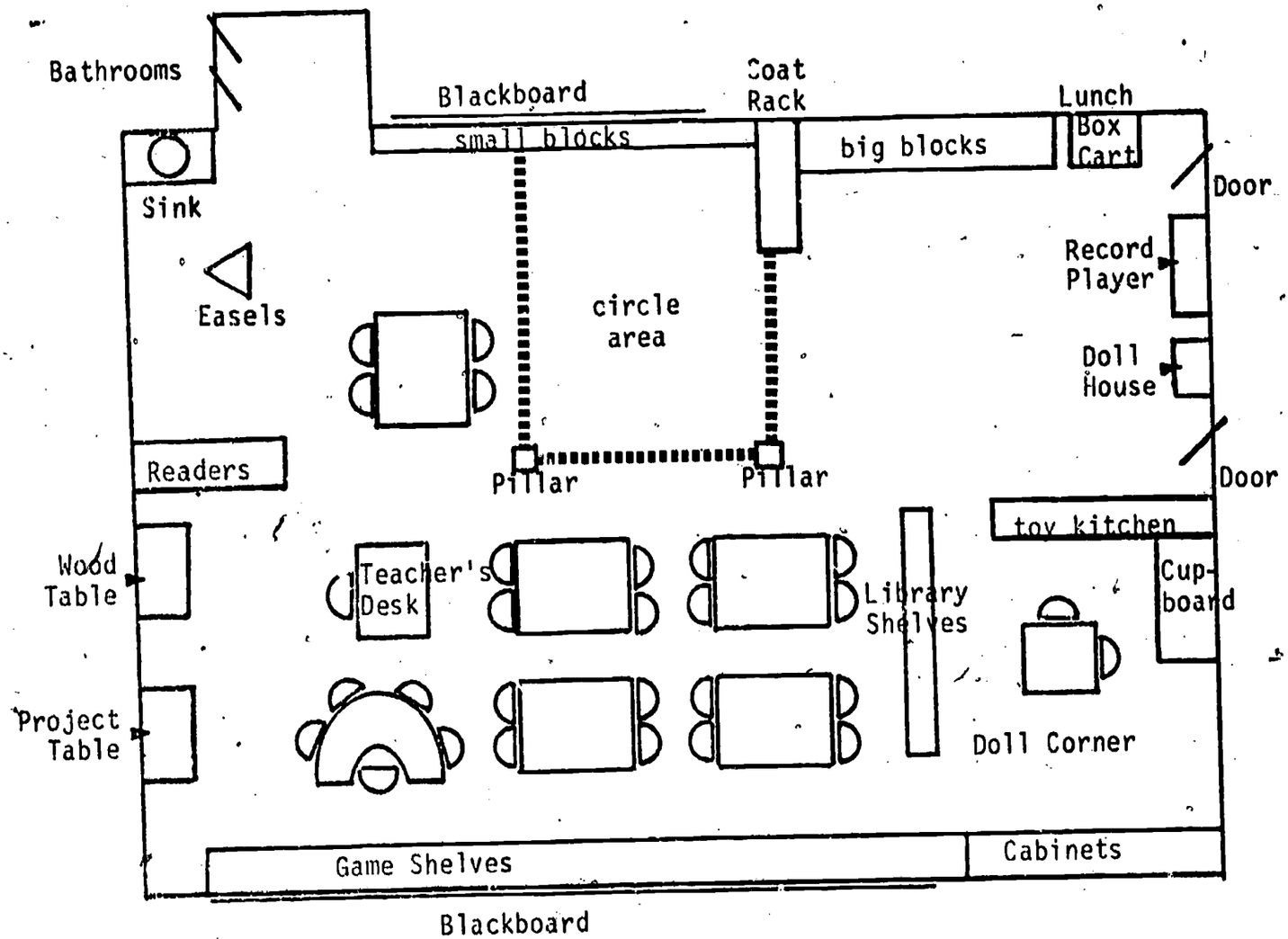


Figure 1. Floor Plan of Kindergarden/First Grade Classroom

active, multi-focused time in which students worked together in small groups, and the teacher customarily joined one of the groups. Members of the class did not have to attend to any one activity in particular. They had to attend to the task in which they were engaged, but that task was allowed to vary from student to student.

The behavioral demands of circles and worktime were thus very different. During the multifocused activities, children were allowed to speak more freely and in louder voices than during circles, and they were allowed to move around the room. During circles, students had to attend to the main focus of the interaction, they spoke at certain times, and they were not allowed to move around the room unless they had the explicit approval of the teacher.

This paper examines in detail the contextual shifts accomplished by students and teacher as they moved from single to multifocused activities. Worktime occurred immediately following the first circle of the day. Students worked on a variety of different tasks during the course of worktime. They were allowed to paint, build with blocks, listen to the record player, or play with dolls. They also had the option of working on one of several "special" tasks that the teacher had set up on any given day such as cooking or crafts. The choice of what to do was almost entirely up to each individual student. Once worktime began, movement around the room and the level of ambient noise were much greater than they had been during the single-focused first circle. Following clean up at the end of worktime, the students reassembled on the rug at the front of the classroom to have the second circle of the day.

Worktime was divided into a number of different segments, for which different student behaviors were appropriate. Figure 2 shows the

segmentation of worktime into its constituent contexts. Recognizing that the boundaries between the contexts of worktime cannot be determined with precision, the researchers attempted to construct a model of the segmentation by repeated observation of the videotapes (Pike, 1967; Erickson & Shultz, 1977). The teacher helped in this process, and the model is congruent with her conception of worktime (Florio, Note 1).

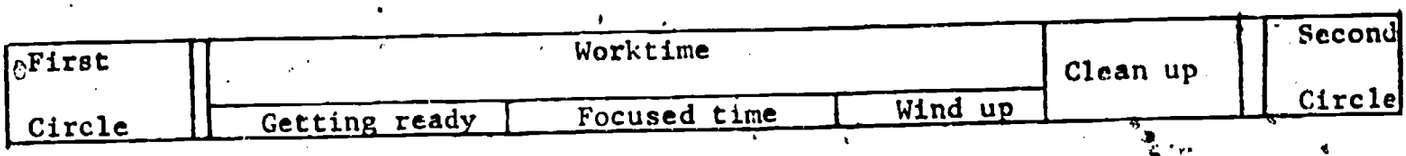


Figure 2: Segmentation of worktime.[4]

Figure 2 illustrates that the worktime activity can be segmented into a series of constituent contexts for interaction. In order for a large group of people to move from a single-focus into small activity groups and back again in limited time and space, changes in the flow of activity must occur. Children and teacher alike must alternately "get ready" for worktime, "focus" on small group activities, gradually "wind up" those activities, and "clean up" the room before gathering on the rug for a second circle. Each of those contexts makes different interactional demands on the members of the class.

[4] The double lines in the diagram represent junctures between major activities, such as first circle and worktime. Junctures between segments of the same activity are represented by single lines (such as the line between getting ready and focused time).

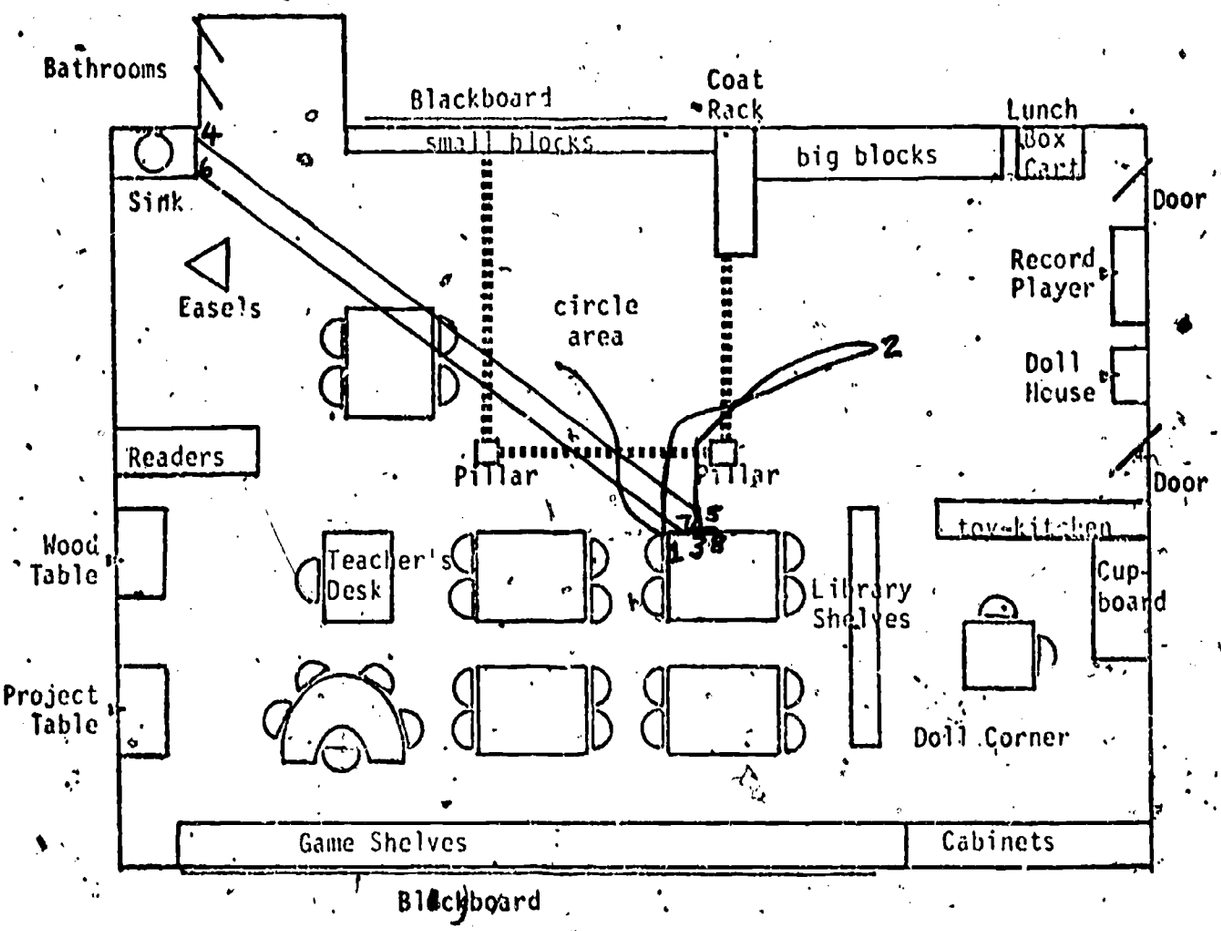
One of the teacher's major social control functions during worktime is, therefore, to communicate to the students what context they are in, and especially to signal when one part of worktime is about to end and another is to begin. The teacher must communicate that something new is happening so that the students know what is expected of them, and students must learn to make appropriate readings of this communicative behavior. This communication of what is going on is especially critical at the beginning of the school year, when the students are still unaccustomed to the routines of classroom life.

Examination of Contextual Changes

Junctures Between Segments of Worktime

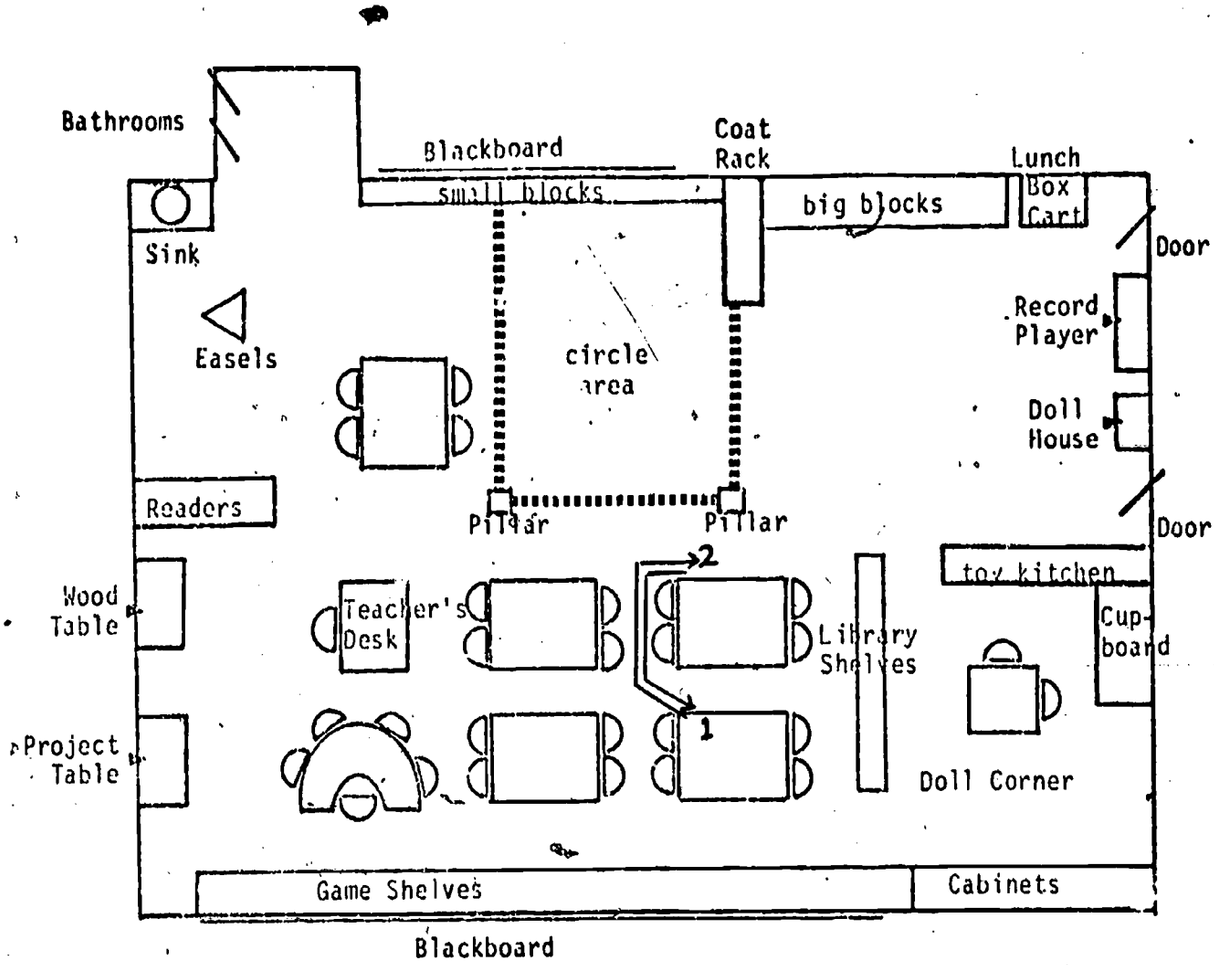
Worktime is a noisy, active time in which there are a number of groups extant in the room, each with its own focus. Participant observation and analysis of videotapes suggest that, during such an active time, speech is difficult to hear and even more difficult to place in the foreground for the communication and interpretation of social meaning. By means of detailed analysis of worktime, it has become apparent that teacher and students alike use movement through space as a powerful cue to context (Florio, Note 1). The lines on the four maps in Figure 3 show the teacher's movement during each segment of worktime on a typical school day.

At the end of the first circle, the teacher and students got ready for worktime (Map 1). The teacher outlined the available activity options and students dispersed around the room in search of a place to work, materials, and partners. Similarly, the teacher moved freely about the room, calling instructions and generally orchestrating the beginning of worktime.



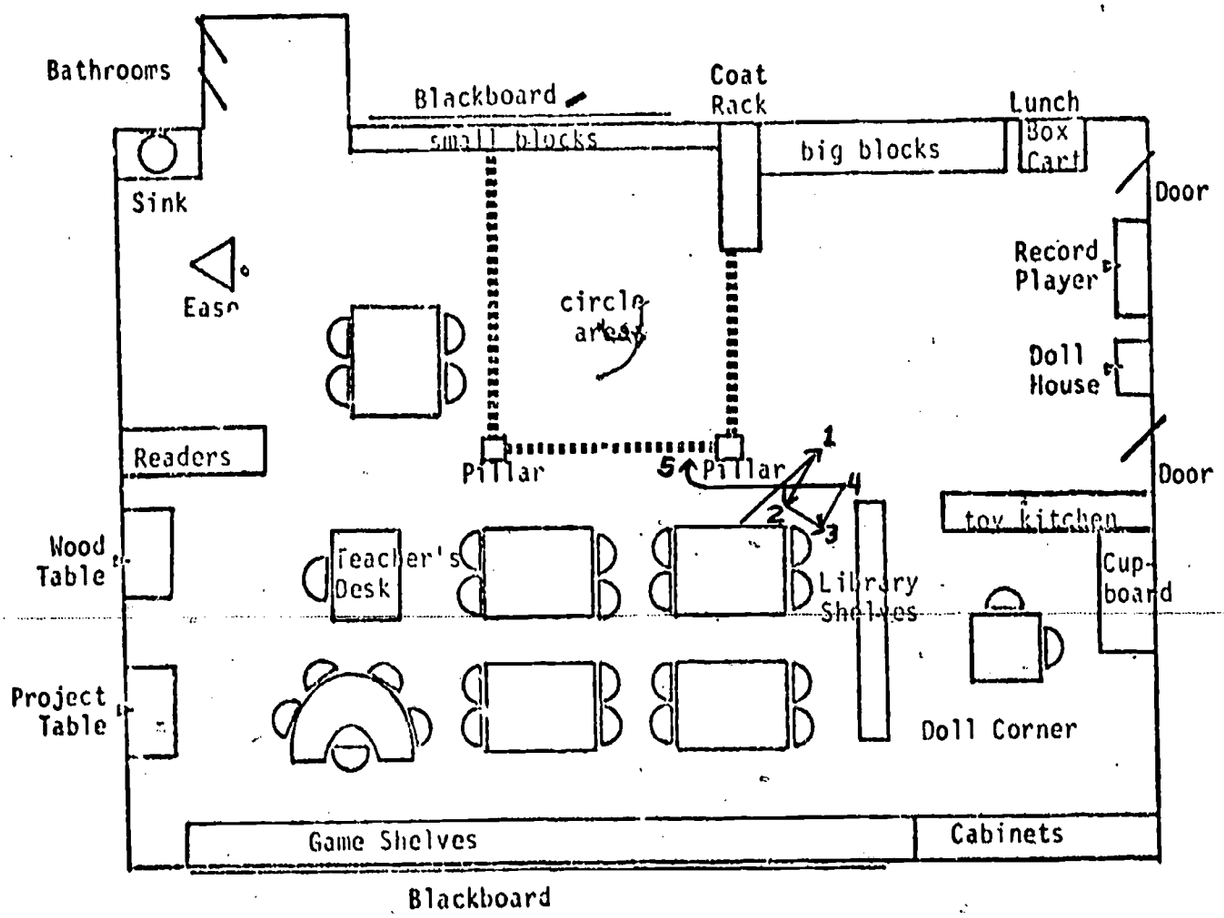
Map 1. Floor plan of kindergarten/first-grade classroom with teacher's movements during "getting ready" time.

Figure 3. Teacher movement during worktime.



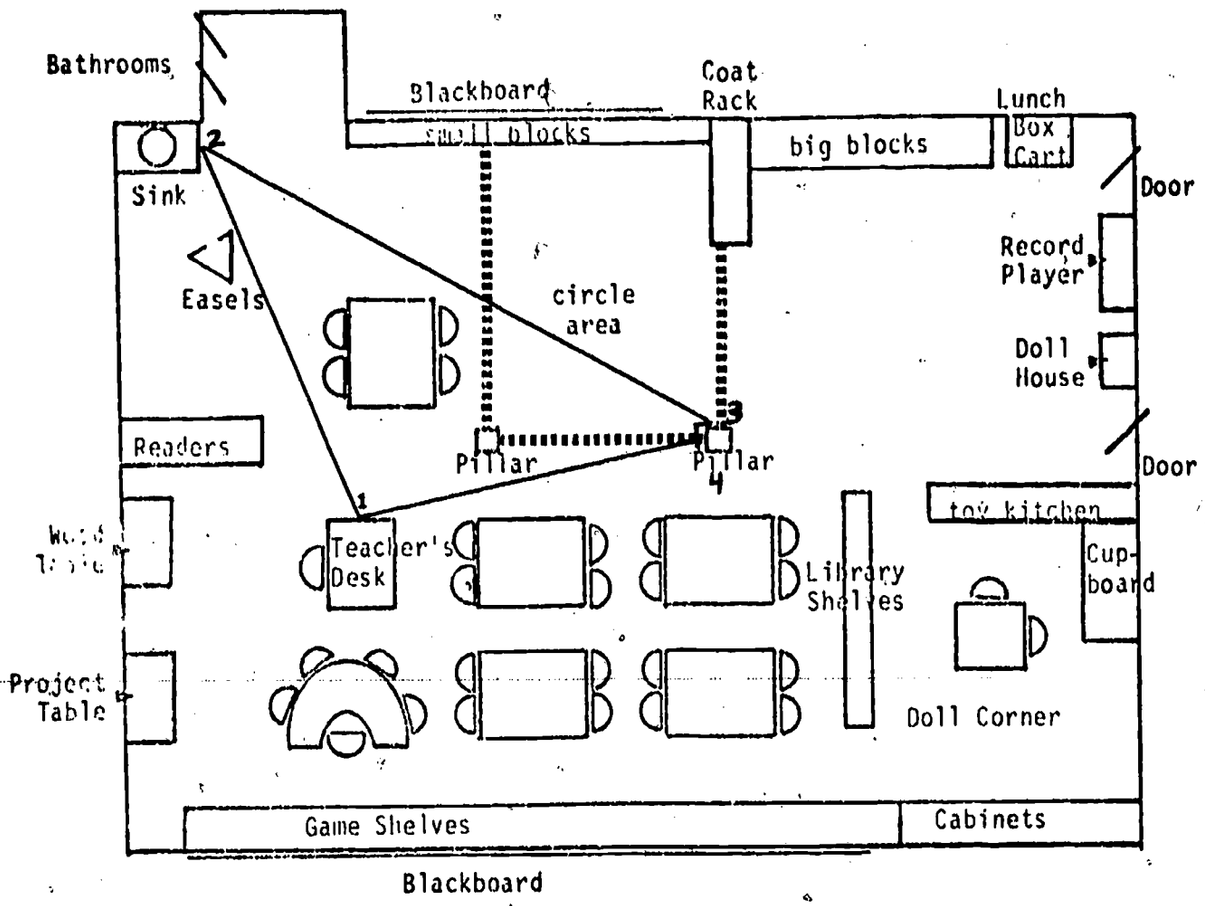
Map 2. Floor plan of kindergarten/first-grade classroom with teacher's movements during "focused activity" time.

Figure 3. Teacher movement during worktime (continued).



Map 3. Floor plan of kindergarten/first-grade classroom with teacher's movements during "wind-up" time.

Figure 3. Teacher movement during worktime (continued).



Map 4. Floor plan of kindergarten/first-grade classroom with teacher's movements during the call to clean up.

Figure 3. Teacher movement during worktime (continued).

During the focused time which followed, children engaged in their chosen worktime tasks. The teacher generally joined one group of children. She intruded neither spatially nor verbally on the other bounded activity groups except when there was an unduly loud noise or large scale movement.

Map 2 illustrates the teacher's focus on one group. She left her table only once during focused time, and then carefully walked its perimeter. The teacher, in reporting her goals for this part of worktime, stated that she hoped each student would, "Find a task, tackle it, and then complete it -- or, if not, have a reason why he doesn't want to complete it -- clean it up, put it away, get something else."[5]

It takes a finite amount of time to finish a game, puzzle, or drawing. Therefore, the focused time came to a gradual end as students completed their tasks and broke out of their groups. Map 3 illustrates that the teacher, too, broke out of the group she was focusing on at that time. As children left tasks and moved around the room during wind up, the level of ambient noise increased. The teacher began to reclaim explicit authority by breaking out of the group she was focusing on and attending more actively to the rest of the classroom.

The juncture between focused time and wind up was frequently accompanied by an announcement from the teacher that clean up would begin in five or 10 minutes. It is worthy of note here that there are some very real time limitations regarding the length of worktime in general, and of any of the segments in particular. The school day was built around a schedule that began at 8:30 a.m. and ended at 11:15 a.m. Within these time limits, the teacher had to accomplish everything that she set out to do for the day. Also, not all of the time that the students spent

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[5]From viewing session with the teacher, 3/11/77.

in the classroom was the teacher's, because there were specialists, such as the music teacher, the art teacher, and the librarian, who made demands on the students' time. For the most part, worktime lasted one hour, from 9:15 to 10:15. Clean up usually lasted from 10-15 minutes, from approximately 10:00 to 10:15, and so the juncture between focused time and wind up usually occurred sometime between 9:50 and 10:00, or five to 10 minutes before clean up actually began.

Presenting the schedule of the school day in this manner makes it appear fairly inflexible. However, on those days when there was no specialist coming into the room, the teacher had a great deal of flexibility in terms of when worktime was going to start and when it was going to end. Similarly, each of the segments could vary in length, depending upon the day. In reality, worktime lasted from 50 minutes to one and a half hours, with many factors contributing to its length.

An important factor contributing to the length of worktime was the amount of time that students were able to do focused work without either getting bored and/or disrupting other students. The juncture between focused time and wind up was, therefore, interactionally accomplished by the teacher and her students.

The teacher must deal with all the time constraints mentioned earlier, and the students contribute to the decision of when clean up should begin by what they do during focused time. As the students began to get restless, and as their attention began to wander, they moved around the room more. In so doing, they intruded on other bounded worktime groups. The teacher, who was aware of the overall amount of movement and level of noise in the room, often took the students' cue and modified her schedule accordingly. In contrast, if the students were working well and things were fairly quiet in the room,

and if there were no external schedule demands, the teacher sometimes extended worktime from one hour to one and a half hours.

About 10 minutes after the warning call issued at the beginning of wind up, the teacher would issue a loud call to clean up, usually by saying to the children, "Stop and freeze!" During the call to clean up, the teacher moved widely and freely about the room, stopping briefly at areas where bounded groups of children had previously worked outside her purview (see Map 4). As she moved, she called loudly to individual children and gestured broadly. In so doing, she began spatially and kinesically to re-embrace the putative teacher role of classroom supervisor, to whom all students were directly accountable (Goffman, 1961).

The juncture between clean up and the second circle was marked by an announcement from the teacher that the students should sit in the circle area. The timing of this announcement was determined by the efficiency of the cleaning-up process; it occurred at the point when most students had finished cleaning up and were already beginning to gather on the rug in the circle area.

The Call to Clean Up

During the six days on which the videotapes were made, the teacher went through a series of steps prior to and while she was making the announcements regarding the junctures between segments of worktime. The junctures were marked in both verbal (the announcements) and kinesic (the series of steps to be described below) channels of communication.

The first step in the process of announcing clean up involved the teacher walking to the circle area (see Figure 1). Typically, as the teacher was beginning to make an announcement, she would walk toward the

circle area if she was not already standing there. The second step in the process was for the teacher to stop in the circle area and finish the verbal part of the announcement. The third step was for her to bend in from the waist while standing in the circle area, and the last step was for her to sit down on a chair in the circle area with the students in front of her while she completed the announcement. Not all of the steps in the process occurred every day. However, there was a finite number of combinations of steps that she followed on any given day, and the order in which the steps occurred was fixed.

While the teacher was going through these steps and making the announcement, students were expected to stop what they were doing and to stand or sit quietly until she finished. The announcements often began with the order to "freeze," which meant that students were supposed to hold their positions and not talk. The end of the teacher's announcement was always accompanied by her breaking out of her "announcement posture," either by straightening her torso or by starting to move around the room again. As the teacher broke out of her announcement posture, students would go back to what they were doing or would begin to do what the teacher had asked them to do. It was not until the teacher broke her announcement posture that students would again begin to move.

The power of the teacher's posture while making announcements is clearly demonstrated in the announcement the teacher made at the juncture between wind up and clean up on one of the days recorded. The teacher walked into the circle area, stopped, and bent in from the waist while she was making the announcement. In the middle of the announcement, she turned out of the circle area to give directions to two students standing behind her. As she turned out of the circle area, the rest of the students began to move around, apparently thinking the announcement was

over. The teacher turned back into the circle area, bent in from the waist even more than she had done previously, and said, "Who told you to move?" The truth of the matter is that the teacher herself, by turning out of the circle area, had "told" the students to move. The students had been attending to what the teacher was doing, as much as to what she was saying. The teacher gave conflicting messages regarding what students should do next. Verbally, she was telling students to stand still, while posturally she had been telling them that the announcement was over.

Table 1 contains the combination of steps that the teacher made on the six days. It can be seen from Table 1 that only five combinations of the teacher's movements occurred while she was making the announcements.[6] They were:

1. The teacher moved toward the circle area (represented as W in Table 1).
2. The teacher moved toward the circle area, stopped in the circle area, and completed the announcement (WX).
3. The teacher was standing in the circle area, bent in from the waist, and completed the announcement (XY).
4. The teacher moved toward the circle area, stopped in the circle area, bent in from the waist, and completed the announcement (WXY).
5. The teacher moved toward the circle area, stopped in the circle area, bent in from the waist, sat down on a chair, and made the announcement (WXYZ).

[6]There are 64 possible combinations of the four nonverbal behaviors that the teacher used while making announcements. Of these, 29 combinations are logically possible. A combination is logically possible if and only if it can be physically accomplished. An example of a combination that is not logically possible is XW. That is, the teacher cannot stand in the circle area (X) and then move toward the circle area (W). Of the 29 combinations that are logically possible, only five, or 18% actually occurred.

Table 1

Combinations of Teacher's Movements Made While Completing Announcements

Day	Juncture between focused work and wind-down	Juncture between wind-down and clean-up	Juncture between clean up and second circle
1	XY	W	W
2	WXY	WXY	WX
3	XY	a) E b) XY	01
4	02	WXY	WX
5	03	WXYZ	04
6	05	WXYZ	WXY

Legend: W = The teacher moved toward the circle area.

X = The teacher stood in the circle area.

Y = The teacher bend her torso in from the waist.

Z = The teacher sat on a chair and the students sat in front of her.

E = Exception

0 = Did not occur. The number after each non-occurance will be used in the discussion that follows.

Note that each of the combinations contains either a W or an X. That is, while making the announcement, the teacher is either moving toward the circle area (W) or standing in the circle area (X). Also note that X, Y, and Z never occur in isolation. That is, if the teacher is to make an announcement from the circle area (X), she must either move toward the circle area (W) or if she is already standing in the circle area, she must bend in from the waist (Y). Also, the teacher only bends in from the waist (Y) and sits down (Z) when she is standing in the circle area (X). That is, the combinations WY and WZ never occur. If the teacher is standing in a part of the room other than the circle area, she never merely bends in from the waist or sits down while completing the announcement. That is, Y and Z never occur by themselves. And finally, Z only occurs after the combination WXY. The teacher does not sit down in the circle area except in those cases in which she moves toward the circle area (W), stops in the circle area (X), and bends in from the waist (Y).

The two instances in which the teacher sat down in the circle area while making an announcement (Z) deserve special attention. Rather than just making an announcement while she was standing in the circle area and bending in from the waist, the teacher chose on two occasions to sit down on a chair and she called the students over to sit in front of her. In these two cases, the teacher assembled the students in a group in order to organize the clean up which was to follow. In both cases, there were severe time limitations placed on the class because of outside influences. In one case, on Day 5, the students had their physical education class in the middle of worktime. This was caused by the absence of the physical education teacher and the reshuffling of schedules. The physical education class was rescheduled to occur

after the focused work segment of worktime, and so there was no time to clean up. When the students returned to the classroom, the teacher realized that time was getting short and that clean up would have to occur in a quick and orderly fashion. She therefore assembled the class before her and gave them very explicit instructions as to how clean up should occur.

The second case in which the teacher sat down in the circle area and assembled the students in front of her occurred on Day 6. On this day, worktime was running late and the music teacher was scheduled to come to the classroom after worktime was over. Since the class had to be ready for the music teacher, they had to clean up quickly and efficiently. Once again, the outside demands on time led the teacher to organize a quick and orderly clean up. Again, the most effective way of organizing the students into an efficient clean-up team was to bring them all together and to issue explicit directions as to how clean up should be carried out.

Table 1 also shows that the order in which the behaviors occur is invariant. That is, W always precedes X, X always precedes Y, and Y always precedes Z. There are no cases in which X occurs before W, Z occurs before Y, etc. The data in Table 1 present a grammar for the teacher's behavior while she is making announcements. There are two basic "sentence" forms that occur in this grammar:

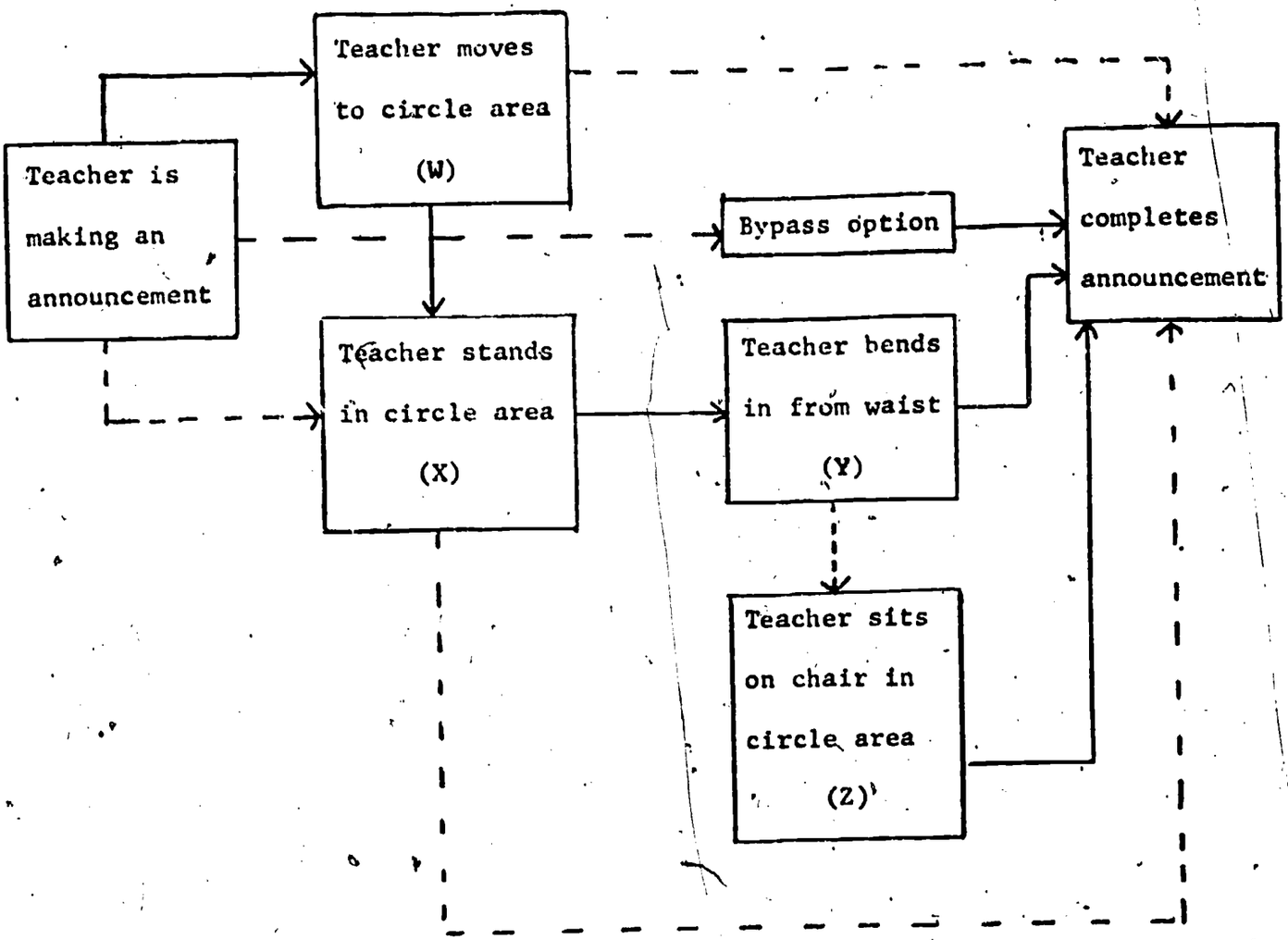
1. [W (X (Y (Z)))]
2. [XY]

In the first type of sentence, behavior W (moving to the circle area) must occur. The occurrence of each of the subsequent behaviors is optional. This formula generates the following combinations: W,

WX, WXY, and WXYZ. The series of brackets indicates that behavior Y does not follow behavior W unless behavior X occurs between them. Similarly, behavior Z does not follow behavior W unless behavior X and Y occur between them.

The second type of sentence is the combination XY. This is the only combination that does not include behavior W. However, since the combination XY represents the instances when the teacher is standing in the circle area and bends in to make an announcement, it, in essence, represents the case where behavior W has been deleted. Since the teacher moves around the room a great deal during worktime, it cannot be assumed that she has been in the circle area during the entire period. It therefore must be assumed that the teacher has moved into the circle area (behavior W) at some point prior to making the announcement. Since the movement into the circle area did not occur while the announcement was being made, it does not constitute part of the teacher's behavior in this analysis. However, it is clear that at some point prior to making the announcement, behavior W (moving to the circle area) did occur.

Figure 4 is a model representing the sequence of behaviors that the teacher performs while making an announcement. It displays the options that the teacher has at any given point in the process of making an announcement. The solid lines in the model represent the path most often followed at any one of the option points. For example, when the teacher is beginning to make an announcement, she is more likely to *move to* the circle area than she is to be already standing there. Similarly, once the teacher moves to the circle area, she is more likely to *stand* in the circle area than move toward it while she is completing the announcement.



———— = Occurs more often

---------- = Occurs less often

NOTE: The path that consists of two broken lines (----) never occurs. Each path must contain at least one solid line (————).

Figure 4: A Model for Making Announcements During Worktime

The bypass option presented in the model is used to account for the instances in which the teacher makes an announcement without going through the steps outlined above. From Table 1, it can be seen that there was only one such exception during the days we videotaped. However, the bypass option is presented so that those cases in which the teacher does not go through the steps described above can also be accounted for by the model.

Exceptions to Usual Teacher Behavior

As can be seen in Table 1, the teacher made two announcements regarding the end of wind up and the beginning of clean up on Day 3. The first of these two announcements was an exception to her usual behavior pattern. On that day, she made an announcement to the class to begin clean up from the classroom door. As can be seen in the drawing of the classroom in Figure 1, the door is nowhere near the circle area, from which all of the other announcements were made. In order for the model presented in Figure 4 to account for the behavior of this teacher while she is making announcements, there must be good reason for the announcement to have been made from the door of the room instead of from the circle area.

During the wind up period on Day 3, a fight broke out between two of the kindergarten boys. They had been playing with a set of small building blocks. One of the boys reached over and punched the other one in the nose, causing it to bleed. When the boy noticed he was bleeding, he began to scream and run around the room. The teacher, becoming aware of what had happened, decided to take the boy to the school nurse to have the bleeding stopped. As she told the boy that they were going to go see the nurse, he ran out the door. The teacher

started to run after him, noticed the time on the clock, and then stopped briefly at the door to announce that the class should begin to clean up. Thus, the announcement was made from the door. Given the unusual circumstances, this was a reasonable action.

By the time the teacher had returned from the nurse's office with the boy, the student teacher had organized the remainder of the students into a game as they sat in the circle area. The teacher walked into the room, approached the circle area, broke up the game, and then noticed that the students had not finished cleaning up the mess they created during worktime. At that point, while she was still standing in the circle area, the teacher bent in from the waist and made another announcement to the whole class about clean up.

It is worth speculating on the reasons why clean up was not accomplished successfully following the teacher's first announcement. One possibility is that the student teacher was left in charge of the classroom and, since this was one of her first days on the job, she was not able to handle the clean up process very well. Another possibility is that because the teacher did not go through her usual announcement routine while telling the students to clean up, she may have communicated to them that this was not really an "official" announcement. The unsuccessful clean up was probably due to a combination of the above factors. The point that bears repeating, however, is that clean up was not accomplished to the teacher's liking until after she returned to the room and went through the series of steps usually used to make important announcements.

Unannounced Junctures

It can be seen from Table 1 that there were five instances when junctures between segments of worktime were not marked by announcements

made by the teacher. Two of the instances happened during the first two weeks of school (01 occurred on Day 3, and 02 occurred on Day 4).

In instance 01, there was no announcement to mark the juncture between clean up and the second circle. (This day is described in detail in the previous section.) By the time the teacher returned with the boy from the nurse's office, all of the other students were already sitting in the circle area playing a game with the student teacher. The teacher therefore did not have to make an announcement for the students to congregate in the circle area since they were already there. After the teacher made the announcement for the students to disperse and finish the job of cleaning up, she did not have to make another announcement for them to congregate in the circle area, since she had told them to return to the circle area when they finished cleaning up.

Instance 02 happened on Day 4. Approximately 10 minutes before clean up was to begin (and the usual time for the teacher to mark the juncture between focused work and wind up), the remedial speech teacher came into the classroom to talk with the classroom teacher. She stayed there for approximately 10 minutes. By the time she left, it was time for the teacher to make the clean up announcement.[7]

Two of the other instances of announcements failing to occur (03 and 04) happened on Day 5 (in December) and on Day 6 (in April). It appears that by December the students no longer needed to be reminded that clean up was going to begin in five or 10 minutes. They were pacing themselves

[7]As the speech teacher entered the room, the classroom teacher looked at her watch and then noticed the speech teacher. It can be speculated that the classroom teacher was about to make the announcement regarding the fact that clean up was going to begin in 10 minutes and was stopped by the appearance of the speech teacher. However, this is merely speculation. Since the teacher was not asked about her intentions at the time, there is no way to know why she looked at her watch.

better and had a better notion about the length of worktime. The students began to wind up their activities on their own, and so they did not need to be reminded by the teacher.

Discussion

The teacher used a specific series of steps while making announcements. The importance of this series of steps is that it signaled to students that something new and important was about to happen. Students needed to know that as soon as the teacher initiated the series of steps, they were supposed to pay attention. That is, if the teacher began to move toward the circle area, it was time for them to stop what they were doing and pay attention to what the teacher was saying.

The teacher interacted with students a great deal during worktime. However, it was not critical for all students to continuously monitor what the teacher was saying. It was important for the students to listen to what the teacher was saying when she said something that affected the whole class. It was, therefore, critical for students to pay attention to the cues that the teacher used to signal that she was about to make an important announcement.

In the series of behaviors the teacher went through while making announcements, movement to the circle area played a dominant role. However, construed as a place to make an announcement, the circle area is not intuitively the most obvious part of the room for the teacher to have chosen. It can be seen in Figure 1 that the circle area is not the geographical center of the room. When the teacher was standing in the circle area, she could not face all of the students at once. Since students were working throughout the room during worktime, the teacher always had her back to some of them while making an announcement.

While making announcements, the teacher would sometimes turn in a circle, so that she would face all of the students in turn. But she still had her back to some of the students at all times.

This does not seem to be the most efficient way of making announcements. It seems that if one of the major functions of the announcements is to control and change the behavior of the students that it would be more efficient for the teacher to be able to see them all while she was making the announcement. She could have stood somewhere on the periphery of the room and commanded a more complete view. However, she did not do that.

A possible reason for the teacher's use of the circle area for making announcements is that the circle area was the part of the room where she had previously exerted the greatest control over her students. Circle times were the times in the school day when the teacher had most control over what students did and said. They were single-focus activities, and the focus was usually the teacher. Students were told not to speak, not to move around, and in general to sit still while circles were in progress. By returning to the circle area while she made announcements, the teacher was actually using space very effectively. What she was in effect communicating to her students was, "When I am in this part of the room, you should stop what you are doing and pay attention to me." These announcements take on added significance when viewed in light of the teacher's shift in role from small group member during focused time to supervisor of classroom activity during clean up.

It is no surprise that many of the announcements began with the order for students to "freeze." This meant that students were to stop whatever it was they were doing and pay attention to the teacher.

In other words, the order to "freeze"is an order to students to act as they do when they are sitting in the circle. The circle area, therefore, took on special social meaning in the classroom. It carried a meaning of social control that was not carried by any other part of the room, particularly during the early part of the school year. Subsequent analysis revealed that later on in the year, the area around the reading table (see Figure 1) took on similar social meaning (Florio, Note 1). But this did not occur until the kindergarten students had begun to learn how to read, at which time they met during worktime in small groups with the teacher at the reading table. However, since reading instruction did not appear on any of the tapes of worktime used in this study, further analysis of this subject is beyond the scope of this paper.

This social use of space by the teacher marked the circle area as being somehow special. There is another way in which the teacher acknowledged the circle area as being special. At other times during worktime when the teacher had to cross the circle area, she usually did so very quickly. Also, if the teacher stopped in the circle area to talk with a student who was doing something there (playing with the small blocks, for example), she stopped in the circle area and knelt down near the student to talk to him or her. She did not stop in the circle area and bend in from the waist, as she did when making announcements.

Apparently, both the teacher and the students sensibly interpreted the teacher's use of space. This does not mean that the teacher went through this series of steps or used the circle area in this manner consciously. Neither the teacher nor the students were necessarily aware that space was being used in a special way. However, it is

clear that at some level the teacher was performing announcements in a patterned way in order to communicate to students that something important was happening, and students were making appropriate interpretations.

Conclusion

We have attempted to demonstrate a teacher's role in contextual change and the series of steps she used in accomplishing those changes. By performing a set of behaviors in a systematic fashion, the teacher communicated to students when they should pay attention to her. In the absence of those behaviors, students did not need to attend to what the teacher was doing.

At another level, this paper has demonstrated the orderly fashion in which everyday life is carried out. Although the social scene under scrutiny in this analysis was a classroom, the same kind of order prevails in most, if not all, social situations. This order is easier to perceive in some scenes than in others. The order that prevails in what are called "highly structured classrooms," for example, may be easier to perceive than the order that prevails in what have been called "open classrooms." However, the classroom examined in this study would be considered an open classroom, and this paper has demonstrated the orderliness underlying what some consider to be a disorganized situation.

Making sense of classroom order and thereby navigating appropriately across the contexts for interaction within it, are important aspects of social competence. A kindergartner's failure to interpret appropriately the social meaning inherent in the teacher's calls, movement, and use of space can quickly contribute to the formation of a less than promising "institutional biography" for that child. Insight

into the patterns of interaction operant in the classroom and the children's behavior within them may enable teachers to reflect in a more rich and differentiated way about the children whose performance they are expected to assess.

This kind of analysis has been performed on other aspects of life in this classroom (cf. Bremme, Note 2; Florio, Note 1; Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, Note 3; Shultz, in press). The end result of all these analyses will be a comprehensive picture of how everyday life is accomplished in one classroom. Although the specific findings of these analyses will not be applicable to all classrooms at all times, the methods and research techniques developed in them will provide a framework within which everyday life in other classrooms and other social situations can be examined in great detail.

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